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## NOTES AND MEMORANDA.

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### ON THE BEGINNING OF THE COTTON INDUSTRY IN ENGLAND.

Baines,<sup>1</sup> after a careful review of all the sources of information available to him, showed that nearly every allusion to English “cotton” weaving before 1600 bore indication of processes applicable only to woollens,<sup>2</sup> and cited as the earliest unequivocal testimony a passage of the date of 1641 which refers to the linen warp and cotton weft characteristic of the first period of cotton manufacturing:—

The town of Manchester, in Lancashire, must also be herein remembered, and worthily for their encouragement commended, who buy the yarn of the Irish in great quantity, and, weaving it, return the same into Ireland to sell. Neither doth their industry rest here, for they buy cotton wool in London that comes first from Cyprus and Smyrna, and at home work the same, and perfect it into fustians, vermilons, dimities, and other such stuffs, and then return it to London, where the same is vented and sold, and not seldom sent into foreign parts, who have means, at far easier terms, to provide themselves of the said first materials. 3

<sup>1</sup> Baines, *Cotton Manufacture*, 1835, pp. 91-95.

<sup>2</sup> “Bolton-upon-moor-market standeth most by cottons and coarse yarn. Divers villages in the moor about Bolton do make cottons.” Leland, *Itinerary*, 1538, vol. vii, fol. 57. “Many poor people have been well set a-work as well with dressing and frising of the said cottons, as with putting to sale the same.” Statute 33 Henry VIII., chap. xv., 1542. “All cottons called Manchester, Lancashire, and Cheshire cottons, full wrought to the sale, shall be in length twenty-two yards, and shall contain in breadth three-quarters of a yard in water, and shall weigh thirty pounds in the piece at least.” Statute 5 and 6 Edward VI., 1552. “Every of the said cottons, being sufficiently milled or thicked, clean scoured, well wrought, and fully dried, shall weigh twenty-one pounds at the least.” Statute 8 Elizabeth, chap. xi., 1566. “Laneorum pannorum honore (Manchester Cottons vocant).” Camden, *Britannia*, 1590, p. 612.

<sup>3</sup> Roberts, *Treasure of Traffic*, 1641, pp. 32, 33.

Upon this passage he commented as follows:—

No mention has yet been found of the cotton manufacture earlier than the year 1641, and there are good reasons for concluding that it could not have existed very long before that period.<sup>1</sup>

From the above evidence it is manifest that the cotton manufacture had, in 1641, become well established at Manchester. . . . Of course fustians must have been made at Manchester and Bolton for a considerable time before the publication of Lewes Roberts's book.<sup>2</sup>

Writers on the cotton industry continue to cite the passage from Roberts as the earliest trace of this manufacture in England.<sup>3</sup> Cunningham, however, notes "an isolated proposal in 1626 to employ the poor in the spinning and weaving of cotton wool."<sup>4</sup>

I have two bits of evidence earlier in date than the indications already mentioned. The first consists merely of a line or two in a petition of the presumed date of 1610. The petitioner asks the Earl of Salisbury for confirmation of a grant made to him for reformation of frauds daily committed in the manufacture of "bombazine cotton

<sup>1</sup> Baines, p. 97. His reason for this statement is that the poor law of 1601 omits cotton from the list of raw materials which the overseers were authorized to provide "to set the poor on work," and also that Camden and other authors of the last decade of the sixteenth century "are silent as to any manufacture of cotton."

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 102.

Baines adds another, but ambiguous, allusion, which may be taken for what it is worth:—

"George, Humphrey, and Ralph [Chetham] embarked in the trade for which Manchester had for some time been distinguished, the chief branch of which was the manufacture of cottons. Bolton at that period was no less the market for fustians, which were brought thither from all parts of the surrounding country. Of these last especially the Chethams were the principal buyers, and the London market was chiefly supplied by them with those materials of apparel, then in almost general use throughout the nation. . . . Humphrey Chetham, when high sheriff of this county, 1635, discharged the place with great honor, inasmuch that very good gentlemen, of birth and estate, did wear his cloth at the assize to testify their unfeigned affection to him." Fuller, *Worthies of England*, 1663, vol. i. p. 554.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Chapman, *Lancashire Cotton Industry*, 1904, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, 1903, vol. ii. p. 623, quoting J. Stoit, British Museum Additional MSS. 12,496, fol. 236.

A plausible theory, adopted by Baines (p. 99) and subsequent writers (*e.g.*, Cunningham, *op. cit.*, and Chapman, p. 1), connects the rise of the Lancashire cotton industry with the immigration of Flemish artisans after the fall of Antwerp. But positive proof of the theory is still lacking.

such as groweth in the land of Persia being no kind of wool."<sup>1</sup>

More significant is a printed petition to Parliament,<sup>2</sup> undated, but bound up with other documents of 1620-21. I have elsewhere<sup>3</sup> alluded to the circumstances which inspired this petition. A patent for searching and sealing new draperies was granted in 1594, and this was transferred to the Duke of Lennox after the accession of James I. The implication of the petition is that the manufacture of cotton goods was introduced after the patent of 1594, and that the Duke of Lennox attempted to bring them with other new cloths under his search and supervision. It is probable that, had these goods attracted attention in 1594, they would have been included in the alnagership, and apparently the petitioners did not know of any English cottons before that date. The petition claims to have been written twenty years after the introduction of the cotton manufacture, and therefore must have been presented to some Parliament sitting more than a score of years after 1594. It could not, therefore have been presented to the Parliament of 1610, and hardly as early as that of 1614. It is evidently not of the time of Charles, else King James would have been referred to as "his late Majesty" rather than as "his Majesty," and the Duke of Lennox, who died in 1624, would have been spoken of as "the late duke." It would seem, therefore, that the petition must have been offered in 1621 or 1624, and thus the internal evidence accords with the external indication of the date, and 1621 may be accepted as approximately correct.

If the petitioners were well informed when they wrote that the manufacture was planted in England "about

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Peeters to the Earl of Salisbury, State Papers, Domestic, lix. 5. (The calendar assigns the date 1610. The letter could not have been written later than 1612, when Salisbury died.)

<sup>2</sup> London Guildhall Library, vol. Beta, *Petitions and Parliamentary Matters*, 1620-21, no. 16 (old no. 25). The text of this petition is appended. (I have modernized the spelling.)

<sup>3</sup> *English Patents of Monopoly*, in press. Harvard Economics Series, vol. i. p. 27 and note, pp. 27, 28.

twenty years past," we should conclude that the cotton industry began there about the opening year of the seventeenth century. Now, obviously, the cotton manufacturers and merchants of 1621 would not have to depend upon tradition for their information. The facts were still in lively recollection, and, so far as we can see, they had no particular object in deliberately giving a wrong date. Their argument rested on the easily verifiable fact that cotton goods had not been included in the patent of 1594, and that they were included in that of 1613.

This does not fix with absolute certainty the date of the making of the first piece of English cotton cloth, but that cottons became a regular article of trade soon after 1600 may be accepted with reasonable confidence.

I give the full text of the petition, not merely because it is the earliest authentic document which I have found relating to English cottons,<sup>1</sup> nor merely because it assists in fixing the date of their introduction, but for the reason that it affords some insight into the early conditions of the industry. From it, for instance, we learn that the workers and dealers in this trade were not allowed to pursue their business free from public restraints. It may be true, as has been suggested, that the fact that Manchester was an unincorporated town helped the new cotton manufacture by removing it from repressive gild regulations, but the petition shows that cotton goods shared with other new draperies the hardships involved in the attempt to establish a national supervision over the domestic system.

TO THE HONORABLE KNIGHTS, CITIZENS, AND BURGESSES  
OF THE COMMONS HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT:

THE HUMBLE PETITION, AS WELL OF DIVERS MERCHANTS AND CITIZENS  
OF LONDON THAT USE BUYING AND SELLING OF FUSTIANS MADE  
IN ENGLAND, AS OF THE MAKERS OF THE SAME FUSTIANS.

Whereas, by the statutes of this realm, broadcloths and other cloths made of wool, and other kinds of cottons, frizes, and rugs are to be searched and sealed by his Majesty's alnager, yet in the 36th year of

<sup>1</sup> Excepting the brief notice in the petition of 1610 which I have already cited.

the reign of Queen Elizabeth a patent was granted to Sir George Delves and William Fitzwilliams as alnagers for the sealing of divers commodities, as bays, rash, stamell, says, worsteds, grograms, mockadoes, frisadoes, fustians of Naples, blankets, and all sorts of new draperies and new stuffs made of wool only, or most part of wool; and a subsidy and fee for the same for twenty-one years, upon pretence, being made of wool, they were within the equity of the former statutes. And whereas about twenty years past divers people in this kingdom, but chiefly in the county of Lancaster, have found out the trade of making of other fustians, made of a kind of bombast or down, being a fruit of the earth growing upon little shrubs or bushes, brought into this kingdom by the Turkey merchants, from Smyrna, Cyprus, Aera, and Sydon, but commonly called cotton wool; and also of linen yarn most part brought out of Scotland, and othersome made in England, and no part of the same fustians of any wool at all, for which said bombast and yarn imported, his Majesty hath a great yearly sum of money for the custom and subsidy thereof.

There is at the least 40 thousand pieces of fustian of this kind yearly made in England, the subsidy to his Majesty of the materials for making of every piece coming to between 8*d.* and 10*d.* the piece; and thousands of poor people set on working of these fustians.

The right honorable Duke of Lennox in 11 of Jacobus, 1613, procured a patent from his Majesty, of alnager of new draperies for 60 years, upon pretence that wool was converted into other sorts of commodities to the loss of customs and subsidies for wool transported beyond seas; and therein is inserted into his patent, searching and sealing; and subsidy for 80 several stuffs; and amongst the rest these fustians or other stuffs of this kind of cotton wool, and subsidy and a fee for the same, and forfeiture of 20*s.* for putting any to sale unsealed, the moiety of the same forfeiture to the said duke, and power thereby given to the duke or his deputies, to enter any man's house to search for any such stuffs, and seize them till the forfeiture be paid; and if any resist such search, to forfeit 10*l.* and power thereby given to the lord treasurer or chancellor of the Exchequer, to make new ordinances or grant commissions for the aid of the duke and his officers in execution of their office.

The petitioners do conceive (which they nevertheless leave to the consideration of this honorable House), that the said patent concerning fustians made of such bombast or cotton wool, and linen yarn, to be void in law, there being no wool used therein, and the king having subsidy and custom for the stuff whereof these fustians are made, and the patent a grievance and loss to them in their trades, and by seizing their goods, and exactions of such as pretend to be the duke's deputies, of great sums of money for sealing the fustians; or putting the petitioners to annual rents to be at peace, and where they exact money they force the parties to give them a general release; and others troubled by warrants from justices of peace; and namely in London,

the deputy alnager seized a pack of fustians of one George Cornish, worth 50*l.*, and forced him to pay 40*s.* to the said deputy before he could have again his goods, and give the deputy a general release.

A pack of fustians of Lawrence Brinsley seized as aforesaid, and he forced to pay 20*s.* 6*d.* and give a release.

Robert Stevens, a pack taken from him, and he forced to pay for the same 15*s.* 6*d.* and give a release.

John Crow had 7 pieces seized, which cost him 22*s.* to get again.

Robert Graye had a pack taken from him, and redeemed by replevin.

John Goffe had a pack taken from him, for which he arrested the alnager, and spent 10*l.* and thereby got his goods again after 6 months kept from him, but could not bring him to trial.

John Brand of Buntingford being by the duke's deputies many times called before justices of peace for refusing to give them their demands, was by them brought into the Exchequer, and being a poor man and unable to stand in the law, was forced to agree with them, and give a fine and 4*s.* yearly as a rent, and now called the duke's tenant.

Many others are compelled, some to take from them a stamp to seal their own fustians withal, and become their tenants at a yearly rent, for they never care for the sealing of the fustians so they may get money.

For all which causes the petitioners humbly pray, the patent may be brought and seen in this honorable House, and the petitioners relieved, as to this honorable House shall seem good.

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## CHANGE IN MORTGAGE TAXATION IN NEW YORK IN 1906.

This year is notable in the tax history of the State for the disappearance, at least for the present, of the tax on general property for State purposes. A constitutional amendment adopted last fall removes the necessity of imposing this tax for meeting payments on the State canal debt in those years when the receipts from other sources are adequate.

The recent session of the legislature gave a large share of attention to the subject of taxation. A tax commission of fifteen members was authorized<sup>1</sup> to investigate the subject and to report to the next legislature in January, 1907. Minor changes were made in the taxation of miscellaneous corporations, reducing, in certain cases, the tax on capital

<sup>1</sup> Laws of 1906, chap. 346.